



# DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

EPISCOPAL CHURCH CENTER • 815 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10017

Walter H. Boyd, Press Officer  
John Drew Dearnaley, Assistant Press Officer

Telephone: (212) 867-8400

80282

August 12, 1980

## THREE ANGLICANS ARRESTED IN IRAN

NEW YORK -- Three Church of England missionaries are feared to be under arrest in Iran and the recent closing of the British Embassy in Teheran has thwarted inquiries about their fate.

Jean Waddell, secretary to exiled Anglican Bishop H. Dehqani-Tafti, was arrested Aug. 6 in Isfahan and accused of spying for British and Israeli intelligence. Miss Waddell was recovering from a gunshot wound she suffered May 1 in an apparent assassination attempt. Iranian revolutionaries have charged that the Christian hospital in Isfahan -- which was under the bishop's jurisdiction -- was a "spy center."

Miss Waddell, 58, was summoned to Isfahan and British Embassy officials were denied access to her.

A week later, Dr. and Mrs. John Coleman got word to their sons in England that they had been summoned to Teheran from their clinic in Yezd. No further word has been received from them and inquiries have been ignored.

The disappearances come at a time of heightened pressure on every foreign presence in Iran. Roman Catholics have been accused of running spy centers in their schools and the British Foreign Office announced that it was closing its Teheran embassy "temporarily" to protect its employees.

The small Anglican Church has been a target since the beginning of the revolution in early 1979. There have been two attempts on the bishop's life (in one of which his wife was wounded) and the couple's son, a university lecturer, was murdered in the spring of this year.

-more-

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2024



In a recent radio interview, the Rt. Rev. John Howe, secretary general of the Anglican Consultative Council, commented on the developments in Iran and agreed that the Anglican Church appeared to have become a special target "by mischance in a way. At an early stage for reasons that I don't know the Anglican Church was attacked as not being Iranian, which is a strange thing, but it was and I don't know why. But once it had become singled out then it was fairly easy for various bodies, not necessarily the revolutionary government, but for various bodies to home in, because it represented what they didn't like and from that all sorts of other things followed."

The Anglican Church there is largely an indigenous church and the bishop advised the people to "be as loyal as they should be as people of their country" but above all "to be loyal to their God and their faith." He conceded that this was likely to place them in a difficult situation and acknowledged "there is no easy way humanly speaking.

"On the other hand, I would say that the experience of the Churches over the centuries is that by and large when there is a period of persecution it sort of refines the Church down and it recovers rather well."

# # # # #

DP, DX

